

MINUTES

Eugene District Bureau of Land Management
Resource Advisory Committee
Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act of 2000

June 10, 2004
Siuslaw/Willamette Conference Room
Bureau of Land Management – Eugene District

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Category 1: Judy Borgstahl (formerly Fitzgerald), Ross Mickey, and Steve Woodard
Category 2: Edward Alverson, James Baker, Jim Fairchild, Penny Lind, and Bill Richardson
Category 3: Bud Hinman, Jamon Kent, John Lindsey, Anna Morrison, and June Olson

ALTERNATES PRESENT:

Category 1: None
Category 2: None
Category 3: None

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Category 1: Peter Hackett and Joann Mogstad,
Category 2: None
Category 3: None

ALTERNATES ABSENT (noted only for the record, alt's not required to attend meetings)

Category 1: David Schmidt and Liz McCain
Category 2: none (both positions currently vacant)
Category 3: Philip Barnhart and William Dwyer

OTHERS PRESENT:

Wayne Elliott (Designated Federal Official), Julia Dougan (Eugene District Manager), members of the Eugene District BLM Staff, and members of the public.

Designated Federal Official Wayne Elliott called the meeting of the Eugene District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) for the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act of 2000 to order at 9:05 a.m. He noted that a quorum was present. He re-

ported that the current Chair, Joanell Mogstad, had asked to be excused from this meeting and that member Jamon Kent stated he was required to leave the meeting early.

Mr. Elliott stated that the May 20, 2004, RAC meeting had been held without a quorum present to receive presentations regarding 'Round 4' Title II Projects. He said no recommendations about them had been made and that draft minutes of the meeting had been prepared and distributed. He said it had been agreed to schedule the current meeting and that Chairperson Joanell Mogstad had designated Category One Member Judy Borgstahl to preside in her absence.

Mr. Elliott stated that appropriate federal and local public notice of the meeting had been given and that a Public Forum was scheduled before the noon recess. He reviewed the meeting agenda and noted that BLM staff and other project sponsors were present to answer questions, if needed, but that no further project presentations would be made.

1. Membership and Election of Vice Chairperson

Mr. Elliott reminded members that all RAC memberships would expire on December 20, 2004. He said members and alternates could be re-appointed to a second consecutive three-year term, at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior, but that those interested were required to re-apply. He noted that application material continued to be available and announced that the deadline for its submission had been extended until June 30, 2004.

Ms. Borgstahl announced that the position of Vice Chairperson was vacant and that nominations were in order of persons in Membership Category Two.

Ms. Borgstahl determined there was consensus to elect Bill Richardson as RAC Vice Chairperson for 2004-2005.

2. Discussion of "Round 4" Title II Projects

Ms. Borgstahl invited members to ask questions regarding projects submitted for "Round 4" Title II funding.

Ms. Morrison asked if the Invasive Species Control project included funding the development of projects. Mr. Elliott replied that the funds were designated for on-the-ground removal of noxious weeds and invasive plants through BLM contracts.

Ms. Morrison asked why the project was proposed for increased funding in Round 4. Mr. Elliott replied that eradication was planned for a larger number of acres and that some sites would be retreated.

Ms. Morrison asked why the Shotgun Creek Off-Highway Vehicle Trail System project included funding for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) studies. She said she did not believe it was appropriate for such work to be paid by funds superintended by the RAC because it did not produce any on-the-ground effects. BLM Staff Emily Rice replied that on-the-ground effects would only be possible with completion of the NEPA study. She said payment of NEPA study costs were specifically authorized in the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act of 2000. She said no BLM funds were available for work on the Trail System and that it would continue to be in an unacceptable condition without Round 4 funding.

In response to a question from Ms. Morrison, Mr. Lindsey stated that the Knotweed Control Project could not be undertaken without NEPA assessments. He said it would be impossible to carry out the project in a “piecemeal” fashion, eradicating the weed only on property on which NEPA assessment was not required. Mr. Alverson added that it was questionable if Knotweed could be eliminated where it was already established and that it was urgent to pursue eradication in Lane County areas only beginning to be infested.

Ms. Morrison asked if NEPA assessments had been completed for the Aquatic Habitat Restoration Plan: In-Stream Restoration and Aquatic habitat Restoration Plan: Barrier Culvert Removal projects. Mr. Elliott replied that the studies had been completed using other BLM resources.

Ms. Morrison said she believed the Row-Mosby Fire Hazard Reduction project would duplicate work being funded with Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act of 2000 Title III resources authorized by the Lane County Board of Commissioners. She said it appeared to be an out-reach-only effort and would not provide funding for actual protection efforts.

Mr. Baker suggested that the project could be seen as a way to provide fire protection to residents in an area unwilling to support a rural fire district.

Mr. Mickey said it would be important for residents of the area involved to participate in development of a community fire plan.

Ms. Morrison said she was concerned that the timing of the project would conflict with what was sponsored by Lane County. Mr. Elliott replied that it would be possible for the RAC to postpone action on the proposal until the following year.

Oregon Department of Forestry representative Tom Berglund said the purpose of the project was to protect the forest from home fires, but also offered safety benefits to homeowners from wildfires. He said

the effort was ongoing and had been initially funded by a National Fire Planning Grant. He said the proposed project would allow its expansion to Lane County property within one-half mile of BLM land.

Ms. Morrison said she believed the project should not be pursued until the Title III project was completed. She said she had the same opinion about the Coburg/Calapoolia Fire Hazard Reduction project.

Mr. Kent left the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

Mr. Mickey said he believed RAC funds should be re-directed for “hot spots” where fire danger was the greatest and that federal funding for the clearing of nuisance brush should be avoided. Mr. Berglund said the proposed project was not intended to provide landscape management, but protection of the forest from residence fires.

Lane County Financial Analyst John Arnold said the goal of the Title III project funded by the Board of County Commissioners was to work with local area residents and agencies to develop an integrated fire protection plan.

Ms. Borgstahl asked if it would be possible to compare the cost/acre of all of the noxious weed eradication projects. Mr. Arnold replied that the Lane County Forest Work Camp and Juvenile Forest Work Team projects would be the least expensive because their labor costs were much lower. He said the distance an eradication project could be from their bases of operation was limited and could only be accomplished by other projects using contract labor.

Ms. Borgstahl determined that members had no further questions about proposed projects.

3. Funding Recommendations

Ms. Borgstahl determined there was agreement to request those in each Membership Category to determine if there were project proposals they could agree should be “strongly supported” or “strongly opposed.”

Members caucused in Category groups for twenty minutes and reported on their deliberations, as follows:

Membership Category One:

Strongly Supported Projects

University of Oregon Garbage Monitoring
Shotgun Off-Highway Vehicle Trail System
Knotweed Control
Northwest Youth Corps Youth Employment
Coburg Hills Habitat Enhancement

Strongly Opposed Projects

Taylor Boat Landing Recreation Site
Siuslaw Recreation Facilities Development
Row-Mosby Fire Hazard Reduction
Coburg/Calapoolia Fire Hazard Reduction
Mohawk River/McGowen Creek Confluence Area
Stream Enhancement

Membership Category Two:

Strongly Supported Projects

“We could live with any of the proposals.”

Strongly Opposed Projects

Row-Mosby Fire Hazard Reduction
Coburg/Calapoolia Fire Hazard Reduction
Coburg Hills Habitat Enhancement
University of Oregon Garbage Monitoring
Mohawk River/McGowen Creek Confluence Area
Stream Enhancement
Shotgun Off-Highway Vehicle Trail System (Not
Unanimous Opposition)

Membership Category Three:

Strongly Supported Projects

None Identified

Strongly Opposed Projects

Row-Mosby Fire Hazard Reduction
Coburg/Calapoolia Fire Hazard Reduction
Knotweed Control
Coburg Hills Habitat Enhancement (Not Unanimous
Opposition)

Mr. Mickey suggested that consideration of any Strongly Opposed Project be eliminated because recommendations for funding required that at least three members of each Membership Category be supportive.

Mr. Mickey noted that eliminating all Strongly Opposed Projects resulted in requests for all those remaining total \$1,345,958, less than the total funds available for Round 4 projects.

Mr. Mickey recommended that funding for the Lane County Forest Work Camp project be reduced by \$17,000. He said the reduction would return funding to its Round 3 level for reimbursement of BLM costs for generating and monitoring crew work undertakings.

Members engaged in extended discussion of the need for decreasing funding of BLM work related to the Lane County Forest Work Camp project. The discussion appeared to lead to support for eliminating \$5,000 of funding from the Forest Work Camp project and \$5,000 of funding from the Juvenile Forest Work Team project, designating the reduction as elimination of BLM NEPA-related expenses.

Eugene BLM District Manager Julia Dougan stated that eliminating funding from the projects, as proposed, would result in making consideration of any crew work undertaking for the Forest Work Camp and Juvenile Forest Work Team projects that would require NEPA assessments impossible. Mr. Alverson suggested that such undertakings of a pressing nature be considered as projects for special funding in the next Round.

Mr. Lindsey said the proposal would have far-reaching implications because of the ambient nature of NEPA requirements.

Mr. Baker suggested that the proposal could create “major road blocks” for important crew undertakings.

Ms. Morrison said she supported the proposal and suggested that reductions from the projects be carried forward as a balance available for projects in the next Round.

A vote was taken of those opposed to the proposal to recommend that the Lane County Forest Work Camp Proposal and Juvenile Forest Work Team projects be each reduced \$5,000, eliminating funding for NEPA assessments. The proposal carried forward as a majority of members in each category were not opposed to the recommendation to reduce funding by \$5,000 for both the FW Team and Juvenile Forest Work Team.

Ms. Morrison said she was opposed to recommending approval for the Shotgun Creek Off-Highway Vehicle Trail System project because the funding requested would be used entirely for planning and NEPA assessments.

Mr. Mickey said Membership Category One had strongly supported the project because there was extensive local and user concern about the trail system. He said he favored the project because the BLM would be unable to address the concern without resources provided by the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act.

No decision was made about a recommendation regarding the Shotgun Creek Off-Highway Vehicle Trail System project and it continued to be considered for funding.

Ms. Morrison asked how funds requested for the Knotweed Control project would be used. Northwest Invasive Weed Management Partnership Coordinator Patrick Smith replied that approximately 25 percent of the funds would be used for an outreach program to gain legal permission to perform eradication on private lands. He said the balance of the funds would be used for contracts to carry out treatment procedures.

Ms. Morrison said she was concerned that administrative costs would be involved at each level of management of the project. She said she was unwilling to provide Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act funds to support watershed council administrative costs.

Mr. Elliott pointed out that a project involving the use of federal resources (funding) on private lands required NEPA assessments if the Federal agency has decision authority over the project and specific information about the project is available, e.g. where the project is located, how the federal funding is being used, etc.

Mr. Smith stated that Knotweed was considered an ecological threat.

Ms. Morrison said she was strongly opposed to the project because too few resources were to be used in producing on-the-ground results.

Members discussed the level and appropriateness of contractor administrative costs. Consideration was given to funding BLM indirect costs at a lower level in the next Round, deeming it unrealistic to assume that only on-the-ground expenses should be funded by Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act funds, and proposing that only NEPA assessment costs in the Knotweed Control project be funded.

Mr. Woodard stated that Membership Category One continued strongly to support recommending funding for the Knotweed Control project.

A poll of the representatives of Membership Category 3 was conducted, showing that Mr. Hinman and Ms. Olson were supportive of recommending funding for the Knotweed Control project, and Mr. Lindsey and Ms. Morrison were opposed. The project was eliminated from consideration for a funding recommendation.

Ms. Borgstahl stated that Membership Category One had opposed recommending funding for the Taylor Boat Landing Recreation Site and Siuslaw Recreation Facilities Development projects because the public

might be required to pay user fees in the future for improvements funded by the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act.

Mr. Baker said he believed current users of the Taylor Landing Recreation Site did not want its condition improved.

Mr. Richardson said he believed funding the projects would result in increased use of the areas, which justified their support. He suggested they be re-submitted for consideration in the future.

Ms. Borgstahl determined there was agreement to eliminate the Taylor Boat Landing Recreation Site and Siuslaw Recreation Facilities Development projects from consideration for funding recommendations.

Mr. Mickey asked if there were research and monitoring components in the Coburg Hills Habitat Enhancement project. Ms. Dougan replied that monitoring was included in the project, but that research related to it would need to be conducted by another qualified federal, state, or private agency, society, or institution.

Mr. Mickey said he supported recommending funding for the project because it included active management of timber.

Mr. Fairchild said he was concerned about the project because no biological research supporting its purpose was provided. Mr. Mickey said he believed the BLM Wildlife Biologist had been involved in its development.

Mr. Hinman asked that the purpose of the project be explained. Ms. Dougan stated that the project was intended to produce bald eagle habitat and forest products on BLM land.

Mr. Richardson said Membership Category Two had opposed recommending funding for the project because not enough information about it had been provided. He suggested that additional background be prepared and the project be re-submitted for funding in the future.

Mr. Alverson said he agreed with the comments of Mr. Richardson and that he would favor proposing that a smaller timber area be treated.

Mr. Baker asked if proceeds from timber sales in the project would be returned for allocation through the RAC. Ms. Dougan replied that such funds were returned to the federal treasury.

Ms. Lind said she believed the project had positive potential but that additional information was needed. She suggested that members of the RAC visit the site on an informal study field trip. She asked if any

other funding was available for the project. Ms. Rice replied that the BLM currently received some funding related to monitoring of bald eagle habitat. She pointed out that the project had been proposed because the RAC had requested proposals that included timber harvesting.

In light of the opposition of Membership Category One, it appeared that consideration of recommending funding for the Coburg Hills Habitat Enhancement project was eliminated.

Mr. Steve Mital (University of Oregon, Environmental Studies Learning Program) said members of the RAC had requested additional information about the University of Oregon Garbage Monitoring project. He explained that it was a one-year effort to expand an existing program using teams of university students and staff to map and expand a database of illegal trash sites. He said it would include training of Forest Work Camp crews in the use of Global Positioning Satellite technology and development of an Internet Website to provide interactive monitoring of identified dumping sites. He said the project would leverage the eyes of the public to prevent and cleanup of trash sites on BLM land.

Ms. Morrison said she was concerned that the project would involve ongoing costs for maintaining the internet Website.

Mr. Lindsey said he was concerned that the project did not include an enforcement element. Mr. Mital replied that enforcement processes were already in place and that increased public awareness of illegal dumping would result in additional prevention.

Ms. Borgstahl said Membership Category One had supported the project because it would use carryover funds unused in a previously approved illegal trash removal project.

Ms. Borgstahl determined that the objections of Membership Categories One and Two to the University of Oregon Garbage Monitoring project were removed and that recommending its funding was under consideration.

Ms. Borgstahl noted that a screen-projected spreadsheet showed that consideration was being given to recommending funding for projects in Round 4, as follows:

<u>Project</u>	
<u>Amount</u>	
Abandoned Car Removal	\$20,000
Juvenile Forest Work Team	\$98,255
Lane County Forest Work Camp	\$232,127
Invasive Species Control	\$130,000
BLM Indirect	\$140,200

Shotgun Off-Highway Vehicle Trail System	\$77,000
Aquatic Habitat Restoration Plans:	
In-Stream Restoration (Wildcat, Sal., Leopold)	\$67,500
Barrier Culvert Removal (Shaw, Buck, Haight)	\$14,150
McKenzie Culverts – Fish Passage Improvement	\$135,500
Lake Creek Road Improvement:	
Phase I – Fish Passage and Road Realignment	
Survey and Design	\$79,000
Phase II – Fish passage and Road Realignment	
Construction	\$118,500
Phase III – Paving	
Survey and Design	\$82,000
Northwest Youth Corps Employment	
and Eugene Recreation Maintenance	\$68,126
University of Oregon Garbage Monitoring	\$14,060
Knotweed Control Project	0
Siuslaw Recreation Facilities Development	0
Taylor Landing Site Development	0
Row-Mosby Fuels Reduction	0
Coburg/Calapooia Fuels Reduction	0
Mohawk-McGowen Stream Enhancement	0
Coburg Hills Habitat Enhancement (Eagles)	0
	<u>0</u>
	\$1,267,418
Total Funds Available for Round 4	\$1,567,067
	<u>- \$1,276,418</u>
Balance Carried Forward	\$ 290,649

A vote was taken on whether to support recommending to the BLM Eugene District Manager that Round 4 Title II Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act of 2000 funding be provided for the projects identified above. The vote was unanimously positive by all three committee groups.

4. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Baker moved, seconded by Mr. Richardson, to accept the minutes of the May 20, 2004, meeting. The motion was adopted unanimously, 12:0.

5. Public Forum

No members of the public were present to address the committee.

6. Closing Comments

Ms. Dougan stated that she was concerned that the RAC had not recommended funding of projects developed in response to its request for proposals that included timber harvesting, habitat restoration, and recreation components. She said preparing the proposals had involved extensive work by BLM staff that could not be continued, if the projects were not to be recommended for funding.

Mr. Fairchild said he believed RAC members had not recommended funding for some project proposals because of a disagreement over whether Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act resources should be used to fund NEPA assessments. He said there also appeared to be discomfort over how administrative costs were managed and that desired information was not provided.

Ms. Dougan replied that the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act specifically identified NEPA-related costs as eligible for funding. She said staff had been present at the beginning of the meeting to answer requests for additional information about specific project proposals.

Ms. Dougan encouraged members seek development of project proposals by community groups and individuals. She said the District could not afford to have its staff prepare proposals if they were not funded.

Ms. Morrison said fire hazard reduction projects proposed by the Oregon Department of Forestry had not been recommended for funding because of a Title III project sponsored by Lane County. Ms. Dougan replied that work on the proposed projects would be undertaken in the next year and that reducing their funding would abbreviate the scope of what could be accomplished.

Ms. Morrison suggested that the projects could be funded with carryover resources in the next Round.

Mr. Hinman said previously proposed projects that had not been recommended for funding in Rounds 1-3 had been funded with other BLM resources. Ms. Dougan replied that budget cutbacks would not permit such alternate funding in the future.

Ms. Lind said she believed the RAC was made up of diverse interests and required diverse project proposals.

Mr. Woodard said he did not feel RAC members needed superfluously detailed information about projects such as road construction or culvert replacement.

Ms. Borgstahl said she believed it was most important for the RAC to receive evidence of the benefit received for funding provided for a project. She said high administrative expense was a “red flag” to her.

Ms. Morrison said she believed funding the cost of NEPA assessments was the responsibility of the BLM and should not be paid by Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act resources. Ms. Dougan said payment of such expenses was allowed by the legislation and that the BLM would continue to ask to have its costs for a project reimbursed. She said it would not be appropriate for resources designated for other purposes to be used for Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act proposals.

6. Next Meeting

Mr. Elliott determined that members preferred that the next RAC meeting be scheduled in June 2005. He said he would seek the most convenient time available.

The meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

(Recorded by Dan Lindstrom)